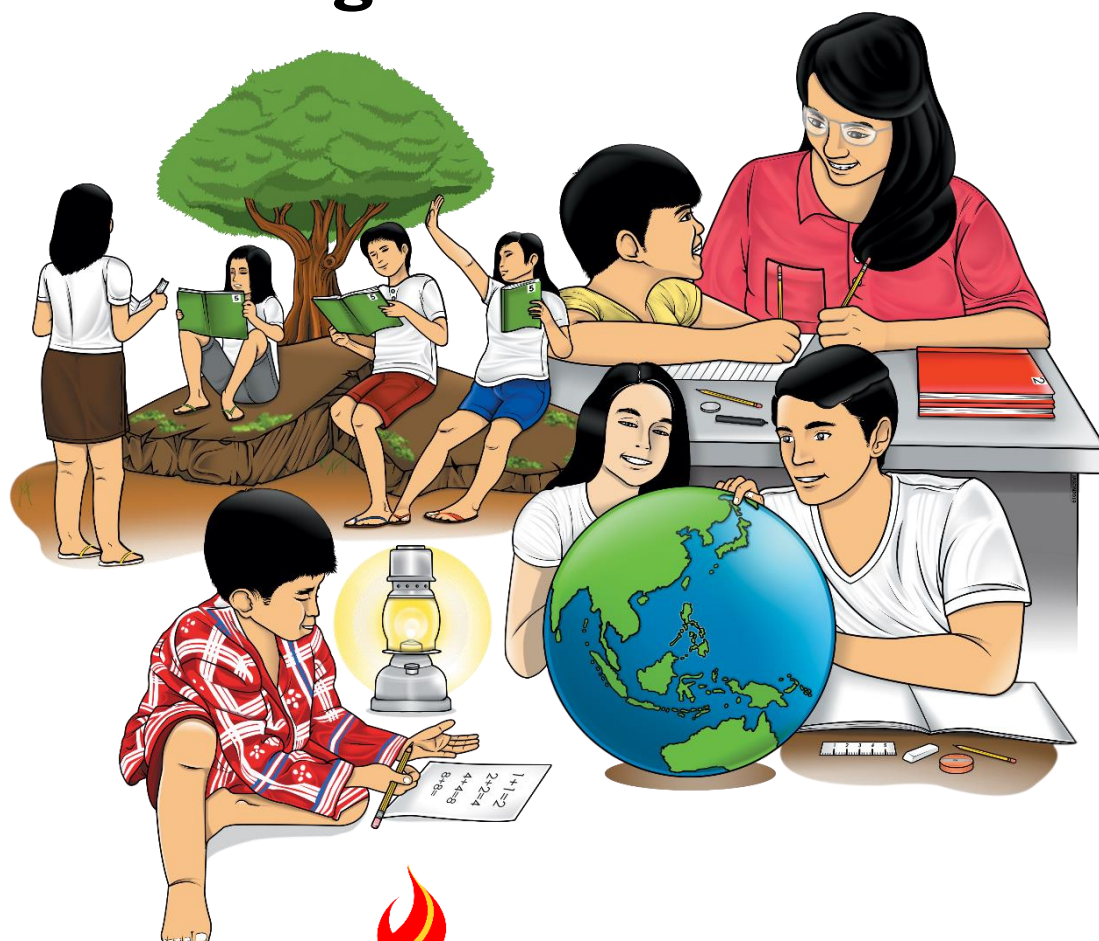


Senior High School

Contemporary Philippine Arts from the Regions

Quarter 1 - Module 7

Living with the Artists



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Lesson

7

Living with the Artists

As you learned in the previous lesson, the Gawad sa Manlilikha ng Bayan (GAMABA) or the National Living Treasures Awards is given by the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA) to recognize Filipino artists who have practiced and preserved the customs, beliefs, rituals and traditions of the indigenous community where they belong. This recognition means that these artists have contributed significant art forms that are timeless amidst our fast-paced environment and multifaceted culture. Though considered as traditional arts by origin, the works of the awarded artists are also contemporary for they continue to be observed and practiced in their community. However, in the middle of the discussion of the former lesson, have you ever asked yourself what made these arts so important? This module will help you understand and appreciate the value of these remarkable arts.

“We must recognize and fulfill our duty to stay true to who we are, remember where we came from, and honor the timelessness of our culture and traditions.” President Rodrigo Roa Duterte remarked in the awarding of Gawad Manlilikha ng Bayan (GAMABA) last 2018.

As the Chief Executive, he believes that preserving the cultural heritage is important to establish our identity as a Filipino. The preserved customs and traditions are important not only for the people who live in the indigenous community but also to the Philippine culture and tradition in general.



What is It

The following are some of the significant contributions of the artists through their arts.

1. Unique Identity.

Traditional arts reflect our diverse heritage and cultural traditions. This is evident in all arts created by the artists who receive the GAMABA award. One of these arts is **weaving**. Though weaving has long been part of our traditions, the use of different materials and the different tedious process make each art unique.

Haja Amina Appi of Ungos Matata, Tawi-Tawi shows how pandan can be weaved into mats with vibrant colors, beautiful geometric designs and fine symmetry. These mats are usually used by their people for prayer or as a gift to the newly-weds.

In Luzon, weaving is preserved through **Magdalena Gamayo** who used traditional patterns. Her work is marked by her ability to replicate designs with

excellence and consistency.

Another artwork of the same kind is t'nalak (a fine abaca cloth) by **Lang Dulay** of Lake Sebu, South Cotabato. She worked on traditional designs like bulinglangit (clouds), kabangi (butterfly), crocodiles, and flowers.

As you can see, though these artists worked on the same art (weaving), their artworks in their community is still uniquely created showing the identity of their community (Estrella, 2020).

2. Exemplary Skills.

The artwork of **Eduardo Mutuc** from Pampanga shows how his skills developed from being a farmer to one of the furniture carvers. To earn an income, he really practiced his skills and became one of the most respected creators of religious and secular arts today. He was awarded in 2004 for his detailed and lifelike pieces of varying sizes: altars, mirrors, retablos, and carosas made with wood, silver, and bronze.

Uwang Ahadas, on the other hand, shows his exemplary skill in music. At a young age, he learned to play music with his siblings. Though kwintangan was usually played by a woman, he mastered playing it. It is made of logs used to call abundant harvest of grains.

Another musician who has shown superb skills is musician **Samaon Sulaiman** who was a master of the kutyapi, a two-stringed lute. He was also proficient in playing other instruments such as the kulintang, agong (a suspended gong with a wide rim), gandingan (agong with a narrow rim), and tambul.

3. Way of Life

Alonzo Saclag of Lubuagan, Kalinga mastered local musical instruments, along with dance patterns associated with rituals. These performances are performed during celebrations or communal agreement such as peace pacts. To pass this tradition, Saclag took a formal education reaching radio stations and creating Kalinga Budong Dance Troupe.

Hearing the tales as told by his mother, epic chanter **Federico Caballero** of Calinog, Iloilo learned Suguidanon, a Central Panay epic. Though Central Panay is located in the mountains, the epic tells about characters and settings that reflect that his people might have lived once in seashores in the past. Also, this epic was usually chanted by a **binukot**, a woman of high status. Regardless of education and social status, women were not given authority. Instead, they were trained for embroidery and memorization of epic. Caballero is known to keep the local oral traditions through his chants (Gowey, 2016).

4. Enduring Values

Values are usually reflected in literary arts such as poem. Thus, the Mangyan script is one of the four remaining syllabic scripts in the country which was preserved through **Ginaw Bilog** of Mansalay, Oriental Mindoro. He was most popular in writing ambahan (a metaphoric poem comprising seven-syllable lines) on traditionally used bamboo tubes. His poems about advising the young, bidding a friend goodbye, and asking for a place to stay show how Filipinos express their affection to their family and friends.

Values is not only reflected in the art product but also on the process in which it is created. In **textile weaving**, we can see the artists' dedication to their work as they intricately put different elements of arts such as color, harmony and shape to create a distinct and vibrant 3 design. Spirituality is also evident among Filipino artists as they use subjects related to their faith such as the textile designs by **Darhata Sawabi** of Sulu and carvings by **Eduardo Mutuc**.

There are countless values that are reflected on the artists' work but one thing that is evident to their works is their unselfish desire to share their knowledge and skills to the next generations to enjoy and to see as part of their beings as Filipinos.

5. Vision.

The traditional art shows the artist's vision. Moreover, it also inspires us to make the existing art as an inspiration to enhance the art or create our own artwork. **Teofilo Garcia** is a gourd hatmaker from San Quintin, Abra. Since he is a farmer, he sees the need of gourd casques. He used the tabungaw (gourd) plant for useful protective hats to help the farmers overcome heat during farming. Because the hat was made creatively and finely, he joined a festival to show his artwork. Who would have thought that a simple hat to help our farmers would soon become a recognized art? He did.

Also, **Salinta Monon**, a respected textile weaver from Davao Del Sur, isolated herself from her family for months to finish her art. She once dreamt of establishing the art through teaching new would-be weavers.

In conclusion, the artworks of our GAMABA awardees are indeed living treasures. Their arts do not only express an idea or feelings but they also carry significant contributions that are imbibed through generations. and inspired the contemporary arts that we use and see today.